



## Background

The United States Postal Service has a long and storied history. Providing mail delivery to every American is a function so fundamental that it's spelled out in our Constitution. It's the second oldest Federal agency. In fact, its predecessor was created by the Continental Congress, and Ben Franklin was the Postmaster there, just as he was America's first Postmaster.

The Postal Service helped launch the aviation industry in this country in 1918 when airmail service began between New York City and Washington, D.C., helping to develop that part of America's infrastructure. The post office helped with the development of the transcontinental railroad service, connecting cities large and small, and was one of the unique institutions that helped bring America together, and it is still doing so today. We must commit to helping the Postal Service continue to play a significant role as America moves forward.

The role of the Postal Service has changed during the last 40 years, moving from a taxpayer funded service to a self-sustaining business that must generate its own revenue. Part of the challenge for Congress is to ensure that it provides USPS with the tools and freedom to innovate and adapt to the 21st century. Over the years, unfortunately, Congress has hamstrung the post office, on one hand arguing that it should not have public support and should operate like a business, and then turning around and denying the Postal Service the flexibility that a private business has.

A declining mail volume and a changing business environment call for additional reform. This has sparked a number of cost cutting measures within USPS, including hiring and wage freezes, moratoriums on building construction and renovation, and voluntary retirements. It is essential that any reforms from within or legislated by Congress not undermine the core services of our Postal Service. This includes unwavering support for rural post offices, 6 day delivery, and first-class mail.

[07-24-12 Postal Service Special Order.pdf](#)

## Solution

Congressman Blumenauer supports bringing S. 1789, the 21st Century Postal Service Act, to the floor, and soon, to provide relief for the thousands of postal employees and local communities that depend on the local post office.

Additionally, Blumenauer believes that Congress should pass the United States Postal Service Pension Obligation Recalculation and Restoration Act of 2011. The Postal Service is in the midst of a financial crisis, largely due to a provision in the 2006 postal reform law that requires the USPS to massively pre-fund its future retiree health benefits at a cost of \$5.5 billion per year. No other agency or enterprise, private or public, is required by law to pre-fund future retiree health benefits, and this harmful requirement must be changed.

These decisions must not be taken lightly. Postal reform is about protecting jobs – the Postal Service employs more people than the entire auto industry in the U.S. – and protecting the universal service provided by a world class mail system. If Congress does not act, it is primarily rural America that will feel the bite of higher costs, less service, loss of jobs, loss of community identity, and a loss of connectivity.

<Previous Idea  
Next Idea>

